



Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ November 2016

★ From the Director

Each year, on November 11th, Americans celebrate and honor the men and women who have served and sacrificed for our great country. We, at the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, have the privilege of not only serving our service members, but also the families of those who answered the call to defend our nation.

It is common knowledge that when the world is in turmoil, it calls on our brave men and women to serve and protect those under threat. Many of you answered that call and served as our defenders from the tyranny of evil. You stepped up and did not back down. You showed the world that America will protect the democracy that we have fought for and attained hundreds of years ago.

On a daily basis, the veterans and employees of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs answer the call for assistance for our Illinois Heroes. I write today to say THANK YOU for the kindness, consideration and time you have offered all of our veterans. Each one of you makes a huge difference in the lives of our veterans. On average, over 400 veterans a day visit our VSO offices throughout Illinois; and we have the privilege of providing the absolute highest standard of quality care for nearly 900 veterans at our Veterans Homes. Every single day, we are interacting with and assisting hundreds of veterans and their families throughout Illinois. That's something to be proud of and I'm certainly proud to work alongside all of you.

I know that we are privileged to live in the United States where the cost of freedom is, as you know, not free; it has been paid for by the sacrifices of men and women like yourselves who have served and fought for the flag of our nation and all it represents. This Thanksgiving, I want to give a special thanks to you and your families for your service and sacrifice in defending the freedom and liberty that we all enjoy. There is no higher honor. Whether you've worn the uniform or not, I thank you for your service to our nation and to our veterans.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Erica Jeffries

Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs



Our mission at the IDVA is very simple. To serve those who have served. In doing so, we serve not only the men and women who have worn the uniform, but also their families. It is our privilege to be able to help our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service to our nation. Our goal is to empower our veterans and their families to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

We know there are many veterans within our great state who do not require any assistance – but we still want to encourage you to “Stand Up and Be Counted!” by registering with your local VSO. In doing so, you're helping IDVA to do a better job of planning for services, seeking federal funding and understanding the needs of our veteran communities statewide. [Click here to register.](#)

We Thank you for your service and for your sacrifice and we at the IDVA look forward to offering our services to You.

★ News from the Homes

The 18th Annual Manteno John Bartosiewicz American Veterans Motorcycle Ride, was held on Sunday November 6th. This Motorcycle ride started in 1999 with only two motorcycles and now has grown to 1,500 bikers and many spectators. The event begins at the Tinley Park Convention Center on Sunday prior to Veterans Day. Rain or shine, with Police escort the many bikers travel down Rt. 57 to the Manteno Veterans Home. IVH resident and member, Ernie Shannon was the honorary road captain of this event leading the bikers in a side car traveling all the way from Tinley Park to Manteno. This is a fantastic event that sends a message from the many motorcycle groups that were so helpful with the donations from the bikers. Along, with the many bikers, our Manteno Veterans Home Administrator, Lester Robertson shared in the biker's spirit and enthusiasm.



Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Honors 24 Korean War Veterans

Korean War Veterans received their long overdue Korean War Medal at the IDVA Home in Manteno, Illinois. During the ceremony, a total of 34 Veterans were honored with 24 Veterans receiving the Korean War Medal. Illinois Army National Guard Captain Thomas M. Gilligan was the guest speaker and awarded the Veterans their medals. Many of the Veterans waited almost 63 years to receive this honor.



Several activities have occurred at our Veterans Home in Manteno, IL. The Veterans were invited to The Hundred Club of Kankakee County to attend their Annual dinner. They were being honored as WWII Veterans our "Greatest Generation" They enjoyed an evening with Peter MacDonald USMC WWII Navajo Code Talker. The dinner was a great success!



The Illinois Veterans Home in Anna keeps all the residents busy with many fun activities. Recently Angela Simmons, our Home Administrator and her staff celebrated all Pink Day and Halloween with the residents.

★ Veterans Cash Lottery and Veterans Cash Grants

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) joined the Illinois Lottery on Thursday, Nov. 17, in launching the newest Veterans Cash instant lottery game at the National Able Network in Chicago. The first Veterans Cash ticket was launched in 2006. It was the first lottery game in the United States to designate 100 percent of net proceeds to veterans. Since then, Veterans Cash has awarded more than \$13.3 million in grants statewide to veterans' organizations that provide vital services, including job training, housing assistance, and post-traumatic stress disorder treatment.

Veterans Cash has funded the **Veterans' Cash Grant** program since its 2006. Proceeds from Illinois lottery ticket sales are deposited into the **Illinois Veterans Assistance Fund**, making it the first Illinois Lottery ticket for which **100 percent of net proceeds** are dedicated to support Illinois veterans - **the IDVA does not take any of these funds** for operations or **Veterans' Cash Grant** administration.

To ensure equitable distribution of resources we welcome and encourage those organizations that have not previously sought a grant to do so. Our next quarterly cycle ends on **Saturday, Dec. 31, 2016** and grant applications are available on the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs website-www.illinois.gov/veterans.



Of course, you can also support the Veterans Cash Grants with a direct donation to the **Illinois Veterans Assistance Fund** - just click [here](#) to get started. Again, 100% of your donation goes to help our veterans and none is used for our operations or fund supervision. Donate today, or buy a Veterans Cash instant lottery game ticket (or two) and help our veterans! Thanks!

★ Serving Those Who Served

This month has been filled with wonderful projects assisting our Illinois Heroes! Over 30 projects throughout Illinois, hundreds of volunteers and many, many smiles on our Illinois Veterans. This is the first year for the month long program. On Veterans Day, one STWS program in Springfield assisted moving furniture into 5 apartments for Veterans. Soccer teams from the University of Illinois-Springfield and Lincoln Land Community College assisted with the heavy lifting. Governor Rauner toured the building with IDVA Director Erica Jeffries. The Governor thanked all the volunteers and assisted with some painting in the main hallway.

Other projects included, the Urban Warriors, Up2Us Sports coaches, Mission Continues, and SVA-Illinois Volunteers in Chicago. They all converged at VFW Post 1284 to do some light manual labor for the post. And the Administration and staff of the Illinois Department of Aging wrote a letter to every Veteran residing in our Quincy Veterans' Home. Thank you to all who participated this year. With everyone's support we made a difference in a Veteran's Life.



Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs program
**SERVING
★ THOSE WHO ★
SERVED**



★ IDVA Calendar

- Dec. 5** Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony Gold Star Family Event - *JRTC, Chicago, IL*
- Dec. 7** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 75th Anniversary - *Springfield, IL*
- Dec. 14** Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council Meeting
IDVA Offices, Chicago and Springfield
- Dec. 24** Hanukkah begins - *Chicago, IL*
- Dec. 24** Christmas Eve - *State Offices Closed*
- Dec. 25** Christmas - *State Offices Closed*
- Dec. 26** Kwanzaa begins
- Jan. 1** New Year's Day / Kwanzaa ends
State Offices Closed



Military Men and Women are always in our thoughts, especially during the Holiday Season. Duty keeps them from friends and family.

**For their sacrifices, we are grateful.
Happy Thanksgiving to all Military Families.**

★ Life After Deployment



If you are like many Illinois service men and women, you probably started making plans for your life back home soon after you were deployed. Looking forward to your future is an important coping mechanism, especially in challenging situations. But here's one thing you probably didn't plan for: everything you've experienced during your tour has come home with you, too. In the war zone you worked with precision, under punishing conditions. But now, at home, a dripping faucet or misplaced car keys raises your tension level. Your patience is tested when your toddler drops her sandwich on the floor. This isn't how you used to react to minor inconveniences. This isn't you.

Regain your normal life

Do you want life to get back to normal, but you're not sure what normal is anymore? The Illinois Warrior Assistance Program is here to help 24/7. Call 866-554-IWAP (4927) now to get the help that you so richly deserve.

IWAP is a confidential resource provided by the State of Illinois. It is not connected to the U.S. Armed Forces or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



State of Illinois
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Illinois Department of
Veterans' Affairs